



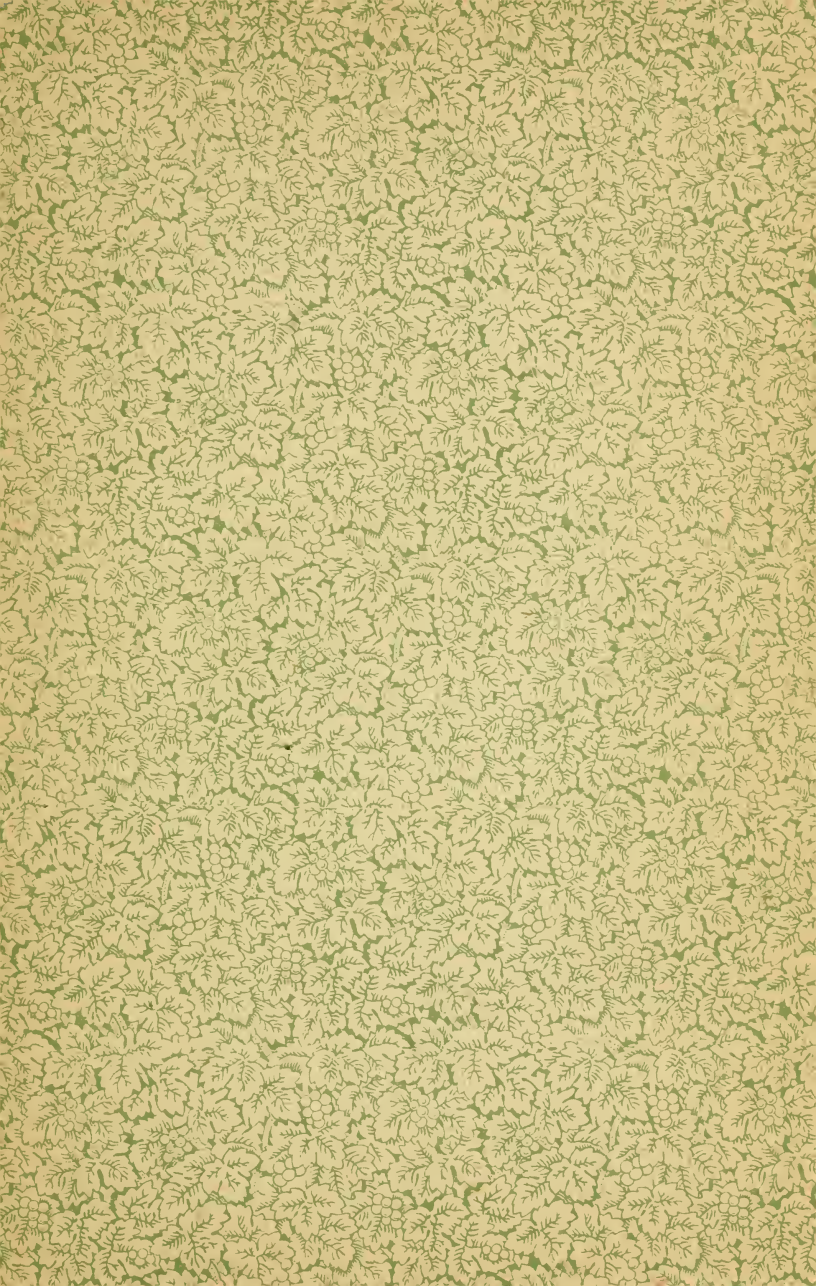
Life
and
Dreams
Poems
by
E. L. E.
I

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INVOCATION.

What thou hast promised, when thy Soul
Awoke, thou must fulfill. To sit
Beneath the solemn dome where Life
Is hid in shadow, hearing there
The litany of Death. Thou art
Within the great Pavilion, where
They rest who come from battle. Here
They put their armor off, and have
New robes ; learning to bend the knee
Before the royal messenger.
Think not thy Soul can enter Heaven
Alone. The mighty gates move only
With golden keys. So keep thy faith
With him who guided thee.

P O E M S.

A REASON FOR SONG.

At Dawn a bird sang loud ; but hushed
Her voice at noon ; and when the Day
Declined, her song again rang soft
And clear among the boughs where she
Was hid.

“ Who is this singer ? ” said
A sleepy Owl who waited night.
“ This is no time for music, when
The shadows lengthen in the West,
And all the earth is growing dim.”
“ I am too late for wedding songs,”
The singer said, “ for nests were built

At morn. But I can sing to them
Who sit alone—their young ones gone,
Sighing for loneliness.”

Then said the Owl : “ There is no need
For singing in the Day. When Night
Has come, I can call out my notes
Of consolation. I will cry
That Night is better than the Day ;
For then we sleep—and so forget.”
“ But I must sing,” the other said,
“ For all the morning I was sad,
And sang not. Now I would bring joy
To them who are like me, bereft
Of nestlings and of nest. For I
Am sitting alone on a windy bough
And the Day is ending ; but yet
My heart is bursting with song !”

THE VIOLIN.

I.

Bring my old Violin. I might again
Evoke the Spirit that has dwelt there since
The wood was taken from the tree, and made
A chamber for the Soul of melody.
If I can wake her from her slumber, she
Will bring the rapture of the early hours,
When I with her soared to the skies. Then, Life
Was fair. I had not known the stress of Love
And Madness. Now, the Spirit may not come
For me. Yet will I call. Give me again
My Violin. The strings may break beneath
My passionate touch ; and there may only come
A sighing from the depths. But yet I know
That still my Spirit dwells within.

II.

Above the rest I fly, on Music's wings.
She came to me when she had heard my voice,
And so together we attain the skies ;
And in and out among the stars we go,
Leaving the other louder instruments
To follow us in upward, echoing flight.
The soft harp trembles far below. The Voice
Of man in vain calls after us. We soar
To Heaven's gate, and join the Lark. When we
Have reached the borders of the firmament,
The wings of Music droop. We must return
To Earth. So down the skies we come, all faint
With ecstasy; and Souls are hushed to hear
Our dying fall.

THE VOICES OF THE WIND.

The West wind has no voice. The South
Is full of melody. The North
Is vague. And all the East is full
Of memories. Would that I sat
Protected from the voiceless West.
It chills me, for it whispers naught.
Let me come rather to the top
Of sun-kissed hills, and feel the South
Breathe Music. Let me go again
Across the Desert, where the palms
Have caught the East wind. Let me feel
I am not quite alone. The winds
Were my companions. Now will I
Invoke them. South and East I love.
Let West and North blow elsewhere.

DANCING AT DAWN.

When harps and viols cease, and lights are dim,
And the fair guests have left the hall, I come
And walk an old-time minuet with him
Who stood behind the dancers, cold and dumb,
While the bejewelled night was in its prime.
None saw him, for his mantle is of mist
That hides its wearer, till arrives the time
Before the dawn, when we no more resist
Life's call. So when the guests are gone, we dance
Together in the silent room, all bare
Of splendor and of light. And when we glance
In the long mirrors, we alone are there;
And we are like the Spirits of the Dead,
Who lead the minuet, when Life has fled.

THE LARK.

He sings without the gate. Within
An angel listens. When the song
Is done, he brings the singer where
His Master sits. Then He, with eyes
Uplifted from his missal, says :
“ Why bring this earthly songster here,
Where choirs of angels all day long
Make Heaven ring ?” The angel said :
“ There is no Lark in all the choir.
I thought you would be glad.” But, no :
“ The Lark’s Song,” says He, “ is too clear.
Above the viols and the harps
It would be thrilling. Leave the Lark
Outside the gate.”

So now he sings
Just where the angels catch the notes,
When harp and viol tremble low,

THE NIGHTINGALE.

He sought a red rose ; for his song
Was made for such a flower. Not one
Was left in all the garden. So
The night was passed in silence. When
The Dawn had come, a white rose blushed
And shamed the silent Nightingale.
So then his song at morning was
The sweetest. Roses white were glad ;
Red roses paled with jealousy.
But yet at night he sang no more.
A blush had changed the Nightingale
From a dark lover of the night
To morning's friend. But rivalry
Divides white roses from the red.

WHY THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS.

Where learned the Nightingale his song ?
Not from the Brook, nor from the Wind,
They have no notes like his.

They say

A spirit prisoned in a Rose
Awakes the Nightingale, and turns
His heart to melody. For when
The Rose is dead, the Nightingale
No longer sings. He sits alone
In the dark thicket ; and he dreams
Of roses all the dying year.
But he is dumb. The wind may blow
On reedy pipes ; the Brook may purl
In silver tones ; but never he
Follows them in a burst of joy ;
The Spirit of the Rose is gone.

IN PLEASANT VALLEY.

I.

All day their song, monotonous and sweet,
The Orioles rehearse. From robins' throats
Fly a full score of brilliant winged notes,
Thrilling the maples in their passage fleet,
And filling the great Elm with melody.
The river, flowing in its shaded bounds,
Yields a rich undertone of silver sounds,
Forever murmuring it would be free !
Weary, perhaps, of emerald shores and skies
Descending to its depths, to there renew
Their beauty, and be clad in deeper blue.
Weary of clouds, and the night's starry eyes ;
And only longing for the wild-bird's wings ;
Forgetting how brief the season that he sings.

II.

Long time the river has in which to hymn
Its aspiration, or its fate lament ;
In Spring or Summer still its voice unspent.
Dark Autumn storms the azure skies may dim,
Yet they but swell its volume. Winter alone
Can hush, with icy hand, its restlessness.
Neither its murmured joy nor its distress
Can reach that heart of frost ; only a moan
When some swift skater careless breaks his way
Down to the gloom.

But spring can melt the frost.
Then leaps the river gladly. Soon is lost
The memory of bondage, and all day
We hear complaint of Summer—staring skies,
And flying clouds, and the night's million eyes.

AUTUMN TRAVELERS.

The rainy nights have come. The lonesome woods,
Abandoned by the fire-flies and the moon,
Stretch vaguely their dark branches in the mist
By paths uncertain we have found a roof,
Whose hospitality will shelter us
Till morn. So from the darkness and the night
We enter into light and cheer. Yet all
The while we hear the whisper of the rain ;
Like the sad spirit who has come with us
Even to the door, but cannot farther pass.
We would not open to him ; and we feel
He should have stayed among the lonely trees,
And found a shelter. The thick cypresses
Would welcome him, and keep him in their depths.

A HUMANITARIAN.

The winter rain is freezing as it falls.
In my old garden one poor sparrow calls
At the high window ; but I open not.
He may be cold, but I have long forgot
The language of Complaint. To me his note
Means nothing. Still, I hope his feathery coat
Will keep him warm ; and some kind soul will give
Spare crumbs ; then if, by chance, the bird should
live

Till Summer comes, that in my garden old
He will not stay too long, nor be too bold.
The sparrows are a predatory race ;
Yet from their depredations, by God's grace,
I have been long exempt. But now, I fear,
I must set snares in all the trees next year.

THE ALPINE HORN.

The melancholy hills at night
Gloom silently against the sky,
Whose vault seems darkness.
Deserted stand they ; watch-fires blaze
No longer, and no Echo hints
Of expectation. Morning breaks.
From firmament to summit shine
The herald torches that announce
The Day is coming ! Then the horns
Wind softly. Deeper, louder, all
The hills reverberate, again
And yet again announcing—Day.

NIGHT.

A night without a Star has come.
Clouds have arisen from the sea,
And taken threatening shape. A Dove,
That spread her snowy wings across
The Eastern heavens, has taken flight
And a dark Eagle holds the West.
His pinions stretch from horizon
To zenith ; and his awful head
Obliterates the moon. Below,
Where underneath the leafless trees
The sad Earth nourishes the worm,
We sit among the shades. The Night
Enwraps us in her deep embrace.
We are forgot by all but Death.

THE OLD GARDEN.

The ghosts that walk below are Violets
And Roses, that in this neglected place
Once grew ; so long ago, they have forgot
Who was their Lady. So they come for you
To show how Death in his dark kingdom keeps
The tender flowers, fair and beautiful
As when they blossomed here. The Voices low
You hear in the old trees, the very winds
May be that blew a hundred years ago.
They died among the blossoms of the Spring ;
But live again in leafless boughs, and tell
Their tale ! But melancholy thoughts always
Have followed Autumn Winds. So listen not,
Turn rather to the minstrelsy that lives
In the charmed pages of your books.

MIDNIGHT REVELRY.

Deep in the thick woods we had wandered;
The owls were awake, and the crickets
Were calling each other. The fairies
Were just coming home, so I saw them.
One beauty was decked out in silver ;
Another was flaunting in purple ;
And all were entwreathed with bright garlands.
A night-moth whirled dizzily by me.
A creature wide-winged, and ecstatic
With wine or with dew, followed after.
I thought there was dancing ; but never
Was certain if whirling were dancing,
Or dancing meant whirling in circles,
And nodding across at each other,
As they did. Some flowers assisted,
And waved in the night-wind.

MAIDEN REVERIES.

We gathered some ferns ; they were fit for
The gate of a palace. So stately
And lightly they nodded good-morning,
We thought they were whispering stories
Of forests enchanted, where fairies
Come silently dancing at midnight.
They decked the broad gate of our palace
All day. But at night they had faded ;
And so we removed them. A token
Of Love unrequited, we brought them
As solace to One who was slighted.
All night in the rain at her cottage
Dark door they were left. In the morning
They had not revived ; but she waited.

LOVE'S ABSENCE.

Love comes not when we call. She goes
Upon her way, nor turns to see
Who follows. Where she goes we know not.
Only that she is gone ; and we
Alone sit with the shades that haunt
The chamber where we lived with her.
To keep us company there comes
Another, whom we call in vain
By Love's sweet name. Sorrow is she,
And on Love's bed she rests, and chills
It, so we sleep no more therein.
All night, waking, we talk with her.
When morning comes, we sleep with Death—
Since Love returns no more.

.

MORNING.

Not when the birds are beginning
Their matins; but just as the Dawn
Comes tip-toeing over the hills,
Weary, I rise from my slumbers.
I open the window, and softly
Floats from the morning a feather,
Dropped in her flight. She has vanished
In flying. I follow : and all
Through the Day I pursue her. But
Never, from Dawn till the Evening,
Catch faintest glimpse of her pinions.
Gone to the uttermost ether,
She hides herself with the planets.
Never again will I open
My window at Dawn and look forth,
Lest I frighten the morning !

RECOGNITION.

In morning, or at evening's twilight hour,
I come to her who at my portal waits.
Softly I open, that no light or sound
May reach her from my Paradise. I touch
Only her garment's hem ; and swift she turns
To him she cannot see. Then on her brow
I place my wreath of amaranth. And she,
Trembling, although with blinded eyes, will say :
“ My Master comes !”

This is enough. I ask
No more of that dark outer world. I go
Back to my Paradise, and find new bloom
On all the trees, new beauty in the skies ;
Since in my doorway there is one who wears
The flowers I gather, and believes them blest.

MY DREAM.

I dreamed my Love was dead, and that his bier
Stood at the portal of my house ; no tear
Fell from my eyelids, as I stood alone,
Apart from him. My heart was like a stone,
For near him wept a Vision of the Sin
He had embraced. And she had entered in
The palace of my Dreams, and so I turned
Away to my lone chamber, where still burned
Within the fragrant torch that he had brought
To light our nightly slumbers. I had wrought
A fairy tale in the broad coverlet that spread
Its silken wonder over the great bed.
So there I went alone ; and left with Her
The corse of my Beloved. Should he stir
In his last sleep (I dreamed), she would be there
To quiet him with dagger pricks. Though fair
My Love had been, yet Death had made him pale ;
And had I wept, my tears could not avail
To bring his roses back. So let him lie

Out there with Her! So cruelly, said I,
In this, my dream of my true Love being dead.
When I awoke, and found my heavy head,
Lying on his breast, I said : " Where is thy Sin ?"
And he said : " I have never let Her in,
Though loud she knocked. I am secure with thee."

* * * * *

So, though my Love be dead, he still shall rest
with me.

TO JANIE.

For thee, no tolling bell, nor sound
Of falling earth, nor deathly scent
Of funeral flowers ; no pageantry
Bearing away thy corse. Only
The angels tell me thou art gone
From earthly sorrows.

I with thee
Knew only Life and Joy. Thou hast
No grave ; and never may I weep
For thee. The hour of our farewell
Was known in Heaven alone. But now
From Paradise thou seest me here
Awake within my tomb ; and tears
Fall from thine eyes. Then flowers spring
About me, and my rest is deep.

ON HER PHOTOGRAPH.

“ If those dear lips could speak !” So do I grieve,
Looking upon the shadow which she cast,
While she stood smiling in the sun.
But they are silent ; and the eyes meet not
My questioning. They look beyond me—sad,
As if they saw a world of loneliness
Beyond the Dreams of Girlhood. Does she see
How Love shall fail, and she alone with Death ?
She looks away from me, and has no word,
Although I cling to her with eyes that should
Withdraw her Soul from silence.

I forget
This is her shadow ; and can never tell .
That she has passed the Gate of Dreams,
And Death is not a Solitude.

JANIE.

Here is her little chair. Sometimes
I see her sunny figure, as she sat
With Book of fairy-tales-or doll ;
Her baby-cheek all flushed, while near
I read my Shakspeare, or hemmed slow
A ruffle—often for the doll.
It is a vision only. She
Is dead ; and I am here alone.
I have her jewel-box. It holds
The rings and chains she wore in days
Of Youth Triumphant. I can see
Her shining beauty rise again,
When I look on these jewels. Eyes
Like starry night—her fleeting smile—
The loveliest mouth in the world—
It is her own sweet face I see.
But always 'tis a vision ; for
My child is dead.

 This tress of dark
Gold hair was once a part of her,
And now remains an atom here

That was Essential to Being ?
 It cannot be. So all the rare
 And ever-changing loveliness
 Which met my mortal eyes was then
 A passing vision.

When I say

She died, I only mean her soul
 Withdrew, and so the Vision sunk
 Away from sight. And I look out
 With tears upon the empty world.
 Dear Janie ! Come again to me !
 Return, although the fairy tales
 Are ended, and the gems you wore
 Are laid aside. Come as you are,
 Changed to my sense ; robbed of the power
 Of Beauty Incarnate. Souls must wear
 Fair shapes invisible ; and I
 Will know, although I cannot see,
 You are as beautiful as when
 The Vision of your Youth illumed
 My troubled years. Come, even though
 I faint amid the silence. Death
 Abides with me until you come
 Again.

APRIL, 1892.

It was the Easter morning ; and she looked
On roses in their beauty. But she turned
Her eyes away and said : “ Bring no more flowers.”
For suddenly the glow and scent were gone
From roses and from life. We do not know,
But struggling in her breast there must have been
A premonition of the end ; for this
Was her farewell. And though we stood with hearts
Hopeful, waiting to lavish flowers on her,
The evening fell, and she was far away
Beyond the sound of voices calling. Yet
They knew it not ! Still foolishly they said,
“ To-morrow she will smile !”

But the next day
They heaped the roses on her desert grave.

TO AN UNANSWERING GOD.

Where is my little girl ?

She went away

One evening in the purple gloom that fades
After the sunset. Then a star came out
And sparkled in the dusk ; but she returned
No more. I called her in the spaces dark
Where Daylight vanishes ; and on the Sea
I followed the faint mists that fled from shore
To shore. Yet still I clasp her not. I only see
The shining star that was not there before.
I come to you—God whom I worshiped—whom
I fain would love. Tell me : Where is my girl ?
If you have taken her, and think to buy
Consent by the creation of a world,
You do not know the way to win a soul.

AN ANSWER.

In heaven's happy sunshine she may be
Singing in a celestial company ;
But yet, her voice will break with tears, I know,
When she remembers I am here below.
About her there may lovers be always,
Her beauty and her innocence to praise ;
Yet she will miss the words her mother said,
With tender kisses on her dear one's head.
In lovely gardens she may walk ; the air
Of Paradise play in her golden hair,
Sweeter than any earthly breeze that blows.
Her feet may crush the lily and the rose ;
Yet she will long to come to me, who wait
In the dark Valley—when the stars are late.

THE SOUL'S JOURNEY.

Back to our Venice, where the green tide flows
And ebbs all day and night, my Spirit goes.
The tall towers lean against the sky, and seem
To look in the dark sea, whose changing gleam
Is shot with color from the red and gold
Of the great sails. They cluster, as of old,
Along the quays and bridges ; still
They fringe the gardens and old walls. At will,
They rest against the palaces ; and find
At the church door a shelter from the wind.
Again I float upon the great lagoon
At evening's quiet hour. And when the moon
In melancholy splendor rises low
Above the sands of Lido, then we row
Over the purple water, where the rose
Of sunset still gleams red. The current flows
Against our boat with murmuring sound
That might be sirens' whispers. All around
The air is sweet with flowers, and sea-scent

The dusky wings of Africa have lent
 The twilight. Or at morning's hour I go
 To the far Islands, whose old towers below
 In the blue sea reflected, sadly tell
 Their story of forgotten pride.

Ah, well !

Let them drop crumbling in the lapsing tide.
 My eyes are dim, I cannot see how wide
 The splendor of the morning reaches here.
 Each sparkle on the Sea is but a tear.
 At morning or at evening, 'tis the same.
 The sea and sky of Venice bear her name,
 Writ all in tears.

May be the Tuscan hills
 Ring not so with sweet music—that which kills
 Me with its Sorrow. I will see again
 From high Fiesole, in the dark plain,
 The shining Arno. All the olive trees
 Are laden with pink blossoms ; and the breeze
 Blows over gardens full of lilies. Here
 I came with Her ; and I can see her—clear
 The Vision—in her straw hat trimmed with flowers,
 Coming up from Florence.

Those happy hours

Forever fled ! Ah, no ; I cannot stay
 By Arno's waters. Let me go away ;
 And where old walls of Rome repeat a great
 O'erwhelming history, I may find rest
 From memories that pierce my anguished breast.
 But roses nod across the broken walls ;
 On the long grasses, gentle sunlight falls ;
 And I have found a broken statue, where
 She leaned her head, with its rich golden hair.
 The broken arches and the stately pines
 Are full of Voices ; while the rich light shines
 On its great tombs, and the far violet hills.
 Always the free air wanders where it wills ;
 So with it I will go. All Italy
 Is full of Sorrow. I will cross the sea,
 And breathe the desert air.

In this Dark Land

The skies are hidden by the whirling sand
 Arisen from Sahara's barren rocks.
 I cannot breathe. In my entangled locks
 The winds of Hell seem blowing.

Murder stalks

By day in Egypt ; and at night there walks
 Horror unseen ; I would not see her *here*.

Why bring me to the Pyramids and show
Me how the Sphinx has dwindled ? I might go
And ask my question. But my heart beats thick
And slow ; my shivering Soul is faint and sick
With terror. Let me leave the land of Death
And Crime ; and feel again the cooling breath
Of the wide Ocean. Its expanse shall be
The symbol of my Immortality.
No more on Earth my Spirit goes in quest
Of Life. The Sea shall give me rest.

DEATH'S MYSTERY.

All Italy was but a tomb ;
 The olive trees being past their bloom,
 We came so late. And everywhere
 A secret horror brooded. Fair
 And beautiful our Island slept
 In the blue sea. And some one wept.
 I was not mad ; but in my Soul
 A mad, bewildered image stole.
 It was myself, in that Dark Land,
 Where graves are dug in drifting sand,
 Calling aloud for Her whose smile
 Haunts the old Palace on the Nile.

* * * * *

But where is she ? The Earth no more
 Holds her dear body. O'er and o'er
 I asked in Italy. A bird
 Sang in the orange groves, and heard

My voice. He grieved with me all day.
 At night, the sea moaned loud alway.
 But still, no answer. Then I knew
 Nature had lost my Dear One, too.
 They said Death held her ; and my fears
 It might be true had dried my tears,
 And driven my soul to frenzy. Then
 I sought in all ways known to men
 For her. But everywhere the Dark
 Was round about me.

Vanished spark

Of Life, that shone but yesterday,
 And seemed immortal ! Where away
 Hast flown ? The universe is gloom.
 I lie in the thick shadow of a Tomb.
 Infinite Silence broods above
 My anguish. If great God is Love,
 Where is He ? She would be with Him.
 That may be. But my eyes are dim
 With tears. And in my sober hours
 I know the God who kills the flowers
 Must be a cruel God. Not He
 Can rule us. Better far that she
 Were really dead beneath the sod.

I thank the heavens, there is no God !—

* * * * *

Each day rose darker than the last ;
 Each night fell blacker. And so passed
 My Life in Italy. And then
 A breath came from the great Unseen
 Wafting me far to other lands.
 But whether amid Desert sands
 Or blossoming fields ; always there came
 On every wind my Darling's name,
 Echoed from the remotest space
 When I had called her ; and her face
 Swam ever on my vision. Tears
 Fell always ; so that I was blind
 To outward forms. My broken heart
 Held only memories. Apart
 From her, I lived no more. A pain
 Forever pierced Life through, again
 And yet again ; as in that Hour
 Supreme, when I had felt the power
 Of madness. Yet I never ceased
 To call on her. Despair increased
 The strength of Will, that carried me

Through gulfs of Darkness. And a sea
 Was roaring round me ; so I heard
 Its mighty thunders. Then came word
 That she was found. A silver Voice
 Re-echoed it.

Let hearts rejoice
 On hear-say evidence : But I
 Would only hold my hands and cry :
 " Give me the clew ! Even if it lead
 Through the dark grave and Hell, the speed
 Of Light shall seem too slow for me !"

* * * * *

What angel in an ecstasy
 Found that fine thread which she had spun
 When she was rapt away ?

* * * * *

The Hours run
 In golden circles. Day and night
 Are one to me. Both flow in light,
 I hold the chain that binds her fast
 To Life. She did not die. She passed
 A little space away from me,

But now has come again. I see
Her, and I hear her voice. She gives
The lie to tales of Death. She lives.

* * * * *

She says, God does not kill the flowers.
They wither in the noon-day hours
When the great sun is fierce. Then He
Takes their sweet breath.

And so, I see
How flowers die. But yet, I know
Not why the sun should fade them so.

RESIGNATION.

Too far have I been wandering. My feet
Have trod the desert ; and the seas I crossed.
Athirst I have been, and none gave me drink ;
Weary, and never found the rest I sought.
So now I will return. There is a door
Stands always open. Let me go, and find
If still within there is a chamber left
For me. It need not be hung all in silk
And perfumed ; for no princely guest am I.
A lowly bed will then suffice. There would
I yield my spirit up to Death ; and hear
The voices of the early morning call
Across the cool and dusky fields. The rest
He gives to his Beloved shall be mine.

CALLING ON DEATH.

I follow Death with no uncertain step ;
I know the way he went, and nearer draw
To him. He bears no cruel dart ; but balm
For my deep wounds. No more my tears shall fall ;
For he will lead me from Life's lonely maze,
Where wavering shadows weave their snares,
To the fair company of blessed ones.
Turn back, oh Death ! and meet me, ere I faint
In the grim darkness of the tangled world.
I am without support, for Love has gone
To thee. And in the Night's obscurity
Despair may steal away my thoughts, and leave
Me more than desolate.

So turn, great Death,
And take me from the perils of my state.

CLAIRVOYANTE.

What lies across the border I can tell ;
 For I have seen without the light of sun
 Or star, the large, vague fields that lie beyond.
 Loved ones are there, though clothed in shrouding
 mist ;
 Sweet faces veiled, and beckoning hands that
 through
 The darkness glimmer, while I strain my eyes
 With longing.

For I fain would go and be
 With them who have gone from me. Never have
 They need of sun or moon. They know the ways
 Of Life and Death, and walk therein between
 The Earth and Heaven. And in their Dark, among
 The shining worlds, always I see, and hear
 Sometimes the Voices calling low to them
 Who hear not. But the Dead are there.

ANGUISH.

Celestial wisdom says : " Call not on Death ;
 But for a space endure the fear of ills
 Unknown, and darkness.

I will bring a light

Setting the snares at naught. Forth shalt thou go
 From this deep labyrinth. In meadows fair,
 Where rich flowers bloom in living colors, there
 Shall Blessed Ones come to thee, while Death finds
 In distant fields his harvest ripe."

I cannot

Heed the voice of Wisdom. Always I go
 Calling blindly still on Death. For Love with him
 Has gone. And though the Blest await me, where
 Life's flowers bloom fair—I would go where Love
 went,
 Borne on Death's bosom to the skies.

DEATH FOUND.

Within the lonely wood I found
No myrtles ; but the hemlock grew
With fragrant boughs ; so to my door
I brought its boding shade. Now, when
The Day with sky of flame has passed,
I may distill a cup, and drink
With Socrates—calling on Death.
And he who waits my voice will come,
And I shall drink no more. My Soul,
Going out to him, shall know not thirst
Nor pain.

Descend, cool Night, and bring
Thy stars. Although the myrtle blooms
In other gardens, here with Death
I rest, beneath the hemlock tree.

MADNESS.

His Soul has fled. The Essence delicate
Of Mind and Being—that which made
Him dear to us—has gone to mingle with
The evening mists that float about the world.
What here remains is but an empty vase,
That holds not even the fragrance of a thought.
So let us bury him, with sound of harps
And horns ; for he was skilled in music. Once
He was a harper to the King, and sat
Among great men.

We will not look again
On him. The light has left his countenance ;
He cannot stir an eyelid ; and his mouth
Is dumb. Put on him seemly robes ; and let
His narrow house be built.

DEATH WAITS.

I.

The world a moment pauses. Shock
 And stir of Life's achievement hushed ;
 And Thought bowed down in silence. Then
 The Soul is heard, and the low voice—
 Drowned all the day in seas of sound—
 Communes with Heaven.

The Sun, obscured

By beaten dust of worn highways,
 Gleams in that moment on the hills ;
 And in the depths of silent streams
 The stars are seen.

Then the World moves :

And silently the Soul withdraws
 From the thick turmoil. She awaits
 Beyond the bounds of Time, till Death
 Shall touch again the world with peace.

II.

Who may repeat what he has heard
 In that still hour ? The Lily's breath
 Is not more delicate, when Night
 Enwraps her beauty. He who knows
 The secret of the flowers would
 In vain attempt betrayal. So
 The word that steals from Soul to Soul
 May not be uttered.

Death has brought
 The story of Immortal Love
 For Life's enchantment. Only he
 Whose lips are touched with heavenly fire
 Can tell it to a World. But still
 The heart may hold her treasure, safe
 As the rich perfume in the flower.

III.

He who would save his soul from Death
 Shall lose his crown of life. For Death
 Gives the reward.

Await him not
 With fear ; but go in that dim path
 Where thou shalt come upon him. There

He sits among the flowers, and holds
 His festival with Nature. He
 Will welcome thee ; and songs of swans
 Mingling with passing breath of rose
 And lily, shall enchant thy soul.
 So give thyself to Death. Think not
 Life has a garland for thee. Hope
 Clings always so to Life ; but Death
 Alone fulfills his promises.

IV.

Always Death waits for thee. He sees
 Thy coming from afar ; and counts
 Thy laggard steps. The richest flowers
 That nod along thy path, he set
 To watch thee, and remind thy soul
 Of him. The thorns that pierced thee were
 The thorns of Life. So why delay
 Thy progress ? Morn and Noon are gone
 And Evening darkens. Come to Death
 Before Night siezes thee. For then
 Thou shalt behold him dimly. So
 Thy Soul will shrink away from him,
 And thou shalt be the prey of fear ;
 And Death will miss thee in the dark.

DEATH THE CONSOLER.

Above this busy little world
There lies another, large and dim
And silent. When I send a thought
Into its vastness, sometimes I catch
The echo of distant thunder.
So vibrates my question—hazarded
Where vision is lost. But answer
There is none ; unless it happen,
When the mad Day is stilled, and Night
Stands quietly above his bier—
The whisper running round the world,
From Star to Cloud, and in the grass
And tree, comes from that upper world
And means but—"Peace."

In lonely places coming with Death
From the great highway, where the din
Of Life has bruised thy aching heart,
Thou shalt be healed. Again thy brow
Be lifted in the morning light ;
And when the Evening comes, sweet sleep
Kiss thy pale lids. For so Death gives
To his Beloved rest and strength.
Here shalt thou see the Dawn, beyond
The circling woods, and Evening's glow
On the still waters ; but the glare
Of Noonday shall not beat on thee.
Thou art within the silent House
Whose walls were built for thee.

Within the vase the flowers that bloomed
In winter, with their roots confined,
Now it is summer would reach out
And feel their mother Earth, where dews
Shall nourish them ; and sun and shade,
Alternate, give them color and strength.
So we transplant them, and our house
Is empty of their beauty. Yet
We grieve not, for we know they live
In a rich garden, where the weak
Are given support ; and where they climb
Among the fairest roses of the year,
Second to none in loveliness.
We shut the empty house and go.

SARGENT'S PICTURE.

Like and unlike ; for then I was
A shadow in Time's mirror. Now
I stand in the great sunlight ; real
And visible to the universe.
Then, to myself I was a doubt,
And none could know me. Now I am
Revealed to self, and every soul
Who comes within my sphere, can feel
My truth and my reality.
I am no more the questioner
Of Death ; but eagerly I turn
To Life, to solve my problem. Where
I dwell Death has no secret. Life
Is now the mystery.

SONNETS.

Not in the twilight only would
I dream with thee ; but in the hours
Of morning, when the dew is bright
Upon the roses ; and at noon
When the warm sun is ripening
The vineyards. These are hours I would
Not pass alone. Whether in shade
Of mountain pine, or by the brook
That runs in sunny meadows, still
We may together watch the sands
Flow in Time's glass ; and if, perchance,
It should be broken, and Time cease
To count the moments, then would we
Be conscious of Eternity.

The thunder rolling in the hills—
The lightning's play—awake me not.
In the deep vale I sleep secure.
And there my soul has laid aside
Her panoply, and rests without
Defense. And wouldst thou waken her,
War's dread alarum shalt thou raise.
Rebellious angels must descend
The ladder of the skies, and sound
The clarion of defiance.
But now we sleep. Yet there are dreams
Which catch the breath, and stir the pulse,
And, reaching out, my hand has grasped
The idle lance, and found it broken.

The splendor of my Years is gone.
Alone, in the gray light, I watch
The vanishing shadows Time has left
To me.

Enchantment weaves her spell ;
And in the gathering Dark return
The golden days. They seem as real
As life was. Yet they say the wand
Of Poesy evokes them. They
Are not of heavenly origin.
But I have heard great Voices tuned
To noble themes ; and sweet the air
About them, as the musky breath
Of Easter lilies, on the morn
Their God has risen.

Wouldst call within thy royal tent
The children of the Desert—soiled
With Dust, and speaking in a tongue
Uncouth ?

They would but stare at thee,
And mock the beauty of thy gems.
And covetous hands might snatch away
The trophies won in thy crusades.
Their feet would stain thy golden threshold ;
And poisoned breath of ditch and fen
Usurp the place of soft perfumes.
So let the silken curtain hang
Untouched by common hands. Princes
May lift it, and commune with thee.

Who am I that I pass my days
In freedom, while the hapless ones
Who throng the wayside wear a chain ?
I am no princess. On my hand
There is no signet ring of power ; my brow,
Uncrowned by Beauty's wreath.
Indeed, I am a Servitor,
And on my breast there is a mark
Set by the hand of Death, who claims
My fealty.

But whom Death chooses
He protects from tyranny. So Life
Holds me no more a slave. I am
Unloosed from custom and from care,
Alone I hold my Soul in peace.

The creatures of the dust, that come
Sightless into the pleasant world
Creep to the shelter of a leaf,
Where the great sun cannot consume
Them utterly. They know not when
The Day has passed, and Night has come.
Each Hour is Eternity
Until some careless footstep treads
Them back to nothingness. But while
They lie in the sweet shadow, dreams
May visit them, and Love may pass
And scatter rose-leaves over them,
While yet they sleep.

Time has brought gifts to thee—not robbed
Thy life of that which made it fair,
As it has done to me. Thou hast
The dreamer's vision still—who sees
The heavens peopled with ideals
Discarded by the world. But I
Have missed in Heaven what I would fain
Possess.

Time stole my Youth ; nor will
The breath of Paradise restore
Its bloom. Yet patiently I wait.
One day thy gaze shall rest on me,
And I shall seem a spirit fair
And glorious with immortal Youth.
So Time, at last, shall be my friend.

Time waits for angels. When he flies too fast
They throw a golden net across his path,
And he is caught. When him they have entrapped,
Sounding their harps, they fill his drowsy ear
With music. So, entranced, he does not know
He is a captive. Folded are his wings.
The Hours who have attended him sit down
Amid the harpings. Then all Heaven smiles
That Time has been brought prisoner.

But I,

Who cannot rest, although sweet music sounds,
Would break the golden net, and bid Time fly
Again, on wide, swift wings. I love the Hours
When they are speeding through the spaces vast,
And bearing with them Thoughts and pleasant
Dreams.

Not at the ever-frozen poles,
 Or the Equator's belt, would I
 Abide ; but in the happy zones
 Where Sun and Rain are friends ; and where
 The roses bud and bloom, and fade,
 And live again.

Regions of change

Invite my soul. The brooding thoughts
 Of melancholy fly before
 Life's joyous enterprise. So would
 I speed my sail on seas unknown,
 And go in search of great Ideals ;
 As Jason tracked the ancient shores,
 After the Golden Fleece.

EVENING IN PLEASANT VALLEY.

The moon swims in a silver sky
Above the misty trees. A cloud
Floats near, and for a moment hides
Her disc. Then the loud whippowil
Calls out ; and the dark river sounds
A warning to the traveler.
There is no light, save here and there
A tiny spark from household lamp
Hid behind glooming elms. And now
Beneath the shadowy porch we hear
A mournful cricket chirp. Its mate
Has been unkind ; and all alone
It sits, complaining to the night.
Poor, helpless insect ! Shall we bring
Thee to our hearth-stone, there to sing
Thy note monotonous ? or shall
We leave thee with thy kin ? The world
Of lower life swarms with its sins
And sympathies. Nearer to nature
Must we have dwelt, to understand.

So leave the cricket in the grass,
Where nightly dews and morning suns
Will bring new friends.

And now the cloud
Has passed. The valley lies again
Revealed in beauty. May has come.

DAY AND NIGHT.

I.

Down the long street we went in silence, while
The faithful hound kept closely at our heels.
Strange curs came barking. Little children play-
ing

Looked shyly on us. Here, no rattling carts
Nor rolling carriages; no sound of toil,
Or flaunting pleasure filled the ways. Tall trees
Stood guarding doors fast shut. No faces looked
From windows on the thoroughfares. We saw
The lake stretch darkly to the horizon
Beyond the village. On its dark green breast
No sails of ships, no birds flying over. So,
We turned again, and towards the open gates
Of our own City, where we dwell always
With heavenly visions—took our silent way.

II.

With stately walls and towers guarding moat
And drawbridge is our City built. Gray are
Its palaces ; its gardens full of shade,
Where many fountains flow always with sound
And music. All night long the sentinels
Walk slowly on the walls. They challenge those
Who come belated. So we enter in
At sunset from our wanderings. Then all
The night we hear the chiming silver bells
In towers. And watching from our palace roof
We count the planets.

Or in some dim room
With lovely visions pass the fragrant night.
When morning comes, again we go beyond
The city gates, and roam the desert world.

MY HOUSE OF DREAMS.

A city in the clouds is not
 More unsubstantial than the house
 Wherein I dwell. Its walls are built
 Of dreams ; its roof is the blue ether,
 Thick with stars. And changing always,
 I am driven from court to chamber,
 Searching a resting-place. Ever
 Beneath me melt the airy floors ;
 And I am plunged in space, unless
 I cling to floating fragments from
 Dissolving dreams.

What I have done
 Has not secured a stable dwelling.
 I built a House of Dreams—and now
 My House is falling.

I would not dwell
 In my ancestral mansion, so
 I raised a fairy palace, where

I went in company with One
Who wandered from a distant star
And found a home with me. Our days
Were spent in dreaming ; and my House
Grew ever strangely beautiful.
Illumination from within
Made it a beacon. Suddenly,
Dreaming was ended.

Then we saw
Our House in ruins ; and the stars
The only steadfast light. And so
The wanderer returned ; and left
Me to Despair.

THE HAUNTED GARDEN.

The house where I was born has fallen
 In ruins. But new walls have risen
 Beneath the Builder's hand ; and there
 I dwell.

The fragrant roses, set
 In the old garden, are the same
 My childhood loved ; but my slim trees
 Have grown so thick they cast a shade
 Where once the sunshine painted gold
 On the white lilies. There I love
 To sit, where I can see my House
 Illumined by the dying sun.
 On plinth and column shines a light
 Emblazoning cold symmetry.
 And when descending Night enshrouds
 The lilies pale, and roses lose
 Their color,—to the great chamber,
 Where the lamps placed ready for the hour

Of evening are illumed—I go.
 The lights are Thoughts held close in years
 My House was building. Dimly they burn
 Before the household gods ; but bright
 And clear they light the Book of Nature.
 There, I wait the stroke of midnight,
 When lights are out !

* * * * *

My narrow bed
 Receives the day's worn garment. I
 Go out again into the night.
 But though I fly to stars, and find
 The morning's splendor, yet it is
 My ancient garden where the Rose
 And Lily perfume the Dark, I love.
 So there I linger, while the Owl
 Calls out my Death.

THE OLD HOUSE.

It stood in shade. A lantern old
Made visible the skeleton
Of what had been a house, but now
Was empty of its Soul. Within
No more Affection lived, or Pride.
Only were left poor, pallid ghosts
Of Time that had been, and of Love
Unfortunate ; except one room,
And there a youth at midnight read
Old tales and poetry, and felt
Life still was in the house. He saw
Bright figures moving in the room,
And heard sweet voices. So the place
Seemed all alive. But he was dead.

In the old house there was a spot
Secluded, where the Lady sat
Who once had been possessed of all
The old domain. Now she was robbed

Of all her titles, and was glad
To sit in silence, counting hours
That slowly chimed. Her casement looked
Upon a faded garden, where no sound
Broke the sad stillness ; save at night
A cricket chirped beneath a tree,
And made her company. So long
Had she been shut in solitude,
She had forgot her name, and thought
Herself a Ghost of Early Days.

LATE HAPPINESS.

Who comes so late ? The world is dark,
 Lit dimly by the distant stars.
 Long since the lilies shut their lids
 In slumber, and the Vesper hymns
 Are dying on the hills. Who comes
 With song and gleaming torch, to wake
 Me from my dreams ?

She brings a train

Of fairy sprites, all garlanded
 With roses, plucked in gardens fair,
 Beyond the twilight sea. Their harps
 Sound the sweet melodies they learned
 In the dark haunts of nightingales.
 I do not love this company
 Of joyous elves. Enough for me
 To take their Lady's hand and lead
 Her to my lonely chamber. There
 In silence would I dream with her.
 But they who are her ministers

Will not away. They grasp her robe,
 And hold her in their midst, so I
 Must open my door to them. Enter ;
 But quench the flaming torch. Sound not
 The harp. Wind silently your way
 In the world's night. You may abide
 Till morn. But I must dream. So late
 Has happiness delayed.

Then she

Who loves not silence nor the dark,
 Pleads for the song and dancing torch.
 "Long has thy soul been sad," she says,
 "Sitting with silent dreams. Awake,
 Even though the night has fallen. Thy house
 Make fit for me. Let flowers bloom,
 And music banish solitude.
 I cannot dream with thee. The night
 Is brief ; and when the morning comes,
 Freighted with heavy cares, I go."
 So I have opened wide my door,
 And all have entered in, with light
 And revelry. Fresh garlands glow ;
 New songs are sung ; and in the court
 A fountain flows, which yesterday
 Was choked with weeds.

THE ENCHANTER'S HOUSE.

I.

We came to an old garden, where our house
Was set. Our chamber had the morning sun ;
And from our window all the heavens were seen
At night. This was our world. We were alone ;
For both were blind. With narrow vision. I
Could only see what I might touch. So saw
I her, and she became my world. But she,
Alas ! had never looked on me. Strange as
All else was in that house enchanted, this
Was strangest : She could see what lay beyond
The garden. In the world outside she was
No longer blind. Yet she had come to live
With me, in loneliness.

II.

For my sake she was there ; since she had loved
The world of Sense. The Spirit forms, to her

Invisible, seemed cold and voiceless; yet
 With me a slender thread of consciousness
 Ran in the currents of her blood. She knew
 I was not other than I said : A soul of man
 Made free from earthly clay ; endowed
 With power and magnificence in realms
 Unknown to her. A little while, and she
 May go there. But the days are long ; and since
 I cannot on the earth walk with her, she
 Has come to me, half way between the worlds.
 So here we live, enchanted each with each.

III.

Life is involved. For, far beyond the spheres
 Of darkened Earth, the wells of wisdom flow;
 Where I too long had drunk for happiness
 With Love. So when my blind enchanted one
 Is for an hour sad, I have no power
 To turn me from her sorrowing, and leave
 Her, as a mortal does. But I share all
 Her idle grieving. So I lose the charm
 Of sweet Contentment, till she smiles again.
 Then there are other days, when strange regret
 Assails me. The bright company with whom

I dwelt before I was enchanted, come
In swift remembrance.

So our lives
In light and shadow, hasten to the end.

IV.

Within our house enchanted, we have power
To touch the blinded lids of sorrow, so
The light may shine again for those who mourn
By empty graves. Together thus we may
Make the world fairer. And our lonely house
Shall bloom with flowers, brought by grateful
hearts

That we have eased. What matters it, if I
Have missed the glories of my spirit-world,
And she is shut away from earthly joy?
And in our chamber other flowers bloom.
The air is sweet with them. For Poesy
Has spread soft perfume there; and color rich.
So our enchantment deepens. Life and Death
Seem one to us.

THE PLACE OF DREAMS.

There is a chamber where the sun
Is powerless. Its windows look
On mountain tops, and bending skies;
While the cool breath from pines that grow
In solitude, sweeps through its length.
There do I go at noonday, when the flow
Of the great Fountain drowns on
My ear, and songs are hushed—the world
Entranced by light.

I would not be
The captive of the sun, and feel
His power. So I, escaping, fly
To my dream-chamber, where I feel
Only the touch of cool, soft hands
Invisible ; and heavenly winds.

MY LADY'S CHAMBER.

A garden where the field-flowers bloom,
 And roses mingle sweet perfume
 With violet scents. This is her room.

Where in the daylight Muses keep
 Their niche secure, and only sleep
 At night. And then her rest is deep.

The Graces take their part, and pass
 A moment at her dusty glass.
 Welcome they are not—for, alas !—

The roses and the field-flowers bloom,
 For them whom long ago the tomb
 Shut in its strange and star-lit gloom.

So all about them is the air
 Of Death ; and this an altar, where
 The memory of the Good and Fair

Has banished Vanity. Desire
And Aspiration feed the fire
That Beauty cannot kindle. Higher

Than Thought can go, the living flame
Ascends. And yet always the same,
Whatever be its sacred name.

And in her lonely chamber, born
Of Love and Death, Hope smiles at morn ;
—Nor is the twilight hour forlorn.

GOING WITH DEATH.

I.

Though I have said farewell to Life
Yet still sometimes I weep. For Death
Has hidden Love, and though I follow
Him, I cannot find her. When the Dawn
Approaches, then I think Love's smile
Steals from the skies ; and at the hour
Of falling Night, her shadowy veil
Floats near me. But I never see
Her face, or hear her voice. Yet oft
Her sigh sobs on the wind. But where
She dwells, I know not. Death, unkind,
Has woven a web of mist above
My vision. On a darkened path
He leads me—still alone.

When I would follow Death, then Grief
Fled from me. She was friend to Life,
And they are old companions. Now
I go alone ; but in my road
Grow regal flowers, whose rich perfume
Surrounds me like a flowing sea
In which my spirit bathes and finds
New promises. Why death should lead
Me among flowers, while Life always
Chose for my path the desert where
Rough stones pierced my tired feet,
I may not know. Perhaps He knew
Life had been tyrant, driving me,
Unwilling, all my days. So He
In pity brought me by this way.

III.

Sometimes Life comes to tempt my Soul
And draw me back from Death. Then I
Remember Grief abides within
The house of Life ; and I am sick
Of tears, and idle moaning. So
I hold my hand to Death, pledging
Anew my all. With him I would
Go down to Hell, or rise to Heaven.
Either is better than the way
Of Life.

Too cruel is Life's bond ;
For he would take away my liberty,
My thoughts, and even my love
Of Poesy ; and in return
Give me my broken dreams !

LONGING FOR DEATH.

After Death's freedom Life seems hard—
A slavery. No rest from Toil,
No sweet release from care, save in
Forgetfulness or sleep. Always
To guard our treasure ; not one hour
Of perfect happiness or peace.
How different with Death ! With him
I knew no care. Forebodings were
Forgotten, and wrong unknown. Let me
Go back again, and find his house
New garnished. Let me look once more
On roses with no worm upon
The leaf ! Beloved one, come with me
To that Paradise.

STARLIGHT AND THE MOON.

A heaven of scintillating stars above
Me spread, reflected in the changing sea,
Invites my contemplation ; but I choose
The shaded grove, where the fair moon alone
Looks down through arching boughs. There have
 I dreamed,
Bathed in her light serene, with Poesy.
The bright stars tremble so, their light is like
The fire-flies,—scattered all among the trees.
Or dancing down in shallows of the pool ;
Always in laughter or in tears ! Perhaps
The golden moon was once a silver star,
Sparkling and flashing in her course ; but now
Her light serene has power to illumine a world ;
While the faint starlight dances in the sea.

HEAVENLY PROMISES.

Think not, dark shadow, you shall always haunt
The house where I have dwelt. I bring a torch
That shall be lit, when I have caught the spark
Struck off in silent thunders in the great
Immensities between the worlds. It shines
Already in my firmament. And I
Reach upward and draw down to me
Its lightning.

Come, thou blessed, ancient light
Of Heavenly wisdom ! Touch me with thy flame
While I stand waiting ; not in fear, but hope
Exulting. So the shadow shall no more
Find shelter. And entering, I shall not breathe
Again the heavy air of Death ; but scent
Of roses will be everywhere !

THE SILENT GUEST.

I.

In Araby the Blest—no need
Soft perfumes to distill from flowers.
The Valleys enfold a scented air,
As the green calyx of a lily holds
The blossom. So the dwellers there
On heavenly odors nourished are ;
Exhaling sweetness as flowers do.
Sometimes they journey in the West
And mingle with the Caravan
On desert sands.

Fainting, they ask
That perfumed waters may be brought
And sprinkled in the dust. Then they
Who march beside the Camels wonder
What weakness this may be.

II.

In that far country, music sounds
Always. The flowing waters, winds
That play on harps Æolian, all
Great nature's voices touch the soul
To harmony.

So when thy guest
Who comes to thee across the waste
Of wide Sahara, and the seas,
Sits silent in thy tent, bring him
Thy simplest pipe, and it will wake
His memory, and call him back
From dreams.

Then can he speak, and tell
What thou wouldst know : whence he has come
And what his errand.

AT DEATH'S DOOR.

The Door was open, and a gentle voice
 Said "Enter. Here all saddened hearts rejoice."
 So without fear I entered ; as one goes
 To a great festival, where the red rose
 Crowns the deep wine-cup, and the feast is spread
 To royal guests. On my long-sorrowing head
 Fell the baptism of joy ;—the welcome blest
 Of those who in the gilded chambers rest,
 After the Day is ended. Music sweet
 Stole to me. Then, about my weary feet
 The golden meshes of a Dream were cast.

* * * * *

So stand I on the threshold ; there held fast,
 In deep enchantment. In the distance gleam
 The robes of that fair company, who seem
 Awaiting me. Yet never can I go
 Beyond the door. The dying ebb and flow
 Of Melody and Light about me stream ;
 But I am still entangled in my dream.

DEATH'S MESSENGER.

I.

I have a Spirit in my house,
Whom Fortune blindly sent. I prayed
For Wisdom ; but his name, instead,
Is Folly. All day long he weaves
A web of sunbeams ; and I sit
Rapt by its splendor, while the Hours
Move noiselessly. But when Night comes,
Then faded falls poor Folly's dream,
Among the twilight shadows. So
I sigh with Folly, till the morn
Brings back the sun. Then we begin
Again our Day's delight—the Spirit
Weaving dreams, and I entranced.
But wisdom comes at Evening's hour ;

II.

So then forgot are Folly's dreams.
I weep alone, thinking on Death,
Whom I have called in vain. I have
Been told how kind he is, bringing
Forgetfulness to pain, and curing
Sorrow. "Oh, would that Death were here!"
I cry.—

Then soft the answer steals
Through the still dusk: "Within thy house,
Thou hast Death's messenger. He weaves
Thy winding sheet. His web of Dreams
That vanishes at night, is changed
By nature's forces to thy shroud.
Thou wearest it unknowing. Even Folly
Weeps when he sees thy smile."

THE PALACE OF DEATH.

I.

A magic wand has raised the walls
Of my great palace. Chambers dim
And vacant wait my plenishing.
In them I dwell, untouched by Care,
While through the echoing galleries
Resound the Voices of the Dead.
When Morning comes, sweet Melody
Enters with heavenly airs. I go
From room to room, with Thoughts serene.
And at the twilight hour I come
Where the great fountain plays, and hear
The music of the feast. But yet
I am always alone, within
My Palace Invisible.

II.

Sometimes I hear a Voice that turns
My Thoughts away ; and holds my Soul
In solitude, with One who stands
Invisible beside me. Then
I know what magic built the walls
For my defense ; whose strength keeps me
Secure, although the darker Powers
Gather about.

And he who holds
My palace 'gainst all enemies,
Has called the lightning to subserve
My need. Not earthly elements
Alone are ministers, who bring
Celestial forces ; for they come
On the winged thunderbolt.

III.

What have I given to him who built
A palace for my days,—who keeps
At bay the encroaching world,—and brings
To mortal weakness heaven's strength?
Only a sorrowful heart. For that
Is now my only treasure. All
I had was lost in shipwreck, when
The Years, with their fair Argosy,
Were nearing a pleasant shore. The sea
Rose in swift anger, and swept away
My world. So was my naked soul
Left, shrieking to the Universe.
Only a broken heart remains;
But it may be enough.

IV.

Once, in my Early Youth, I heard
Low songs sung in the hour of dreams,
By unseen voices. When awake,
I sang them, over and over,
Not knowing their meaning. They were
No childish rhymes. Then I forgot
The trick of singing.

Now, that I
Have given my heart to Him, again
The heavenly Voices sing. Always
I hear them ; and my throat is full
Of music. When I utter it,
I hear the notes of long ago,
Distinct and clear ; but now I know
It is the Song of Death.

HER RETREAT.

I.

Here shall no intruding Thought betray
The Soul, communing with the Unseen.
All sounds of outer Life shall come
In softened echoes. At morn, the songs
Of birds ; at the still noon, the wings
Of butterflies ; and at the eve
The sighing wind : these only shall
Invade the heavenly silences.
Rare flowers, that bloom only where
The Soul is dedicate to Death,
Shed their exquisite fragrance here.
They have been brought by loving hands
To One who dwells in Solitude
And Twilight ; and she finds them blest.

II.

But when the broadened light of Day
Shall shine upon their beauty, then
Imperishable will they glow,
Though she for whom they bloom is passed
Beyond the narrow gate, among
The roses of Paradise.

Not flowers
Alone make sweet the air ; for here
A fountain flows. Learning hath built it ;
Its waters, poured from golden lips,
Fall flashing down into the silver
Pool. Wisdom will offer thee to drink,
And if thou art athirst, thankfully
Receive. But if thou hast no need,
Pass on, nor trouble the clear deeps.

III.

She who holds possession here, Lady
Of Flowers and Fountain, cannot see.
Only her Servant tells her who
Is come ; and who is welcome. Not
Always wise are they who come. They
Bring confusion to the blinded
Eyes of Love ; and listening to their tale,
She knows not whether Heaven be fair
Or dark ; whether celestial suns
Illume the spaces ; or the stars
Beam softly between clouds, so vague
Their speech. So let them not reply
To her sad questioning. Sorrow
And Loneliness have been so long

IV.

Immured with her, that she has lost
The memory of joy ; but spirits serene,
Religion and Philosophy,
Are welcome here.

For her defense
There is a shield, and its reverse
Is flame. Touch it with thy bold spear,
And thou shalt know its art. No power
On Earth can beat it down.

When she
Shall close her door, not one can enter :
For her great flaming shield warns him
Inopportune, who comes at night.
Who passes at the Early Dawn
Is made afraid. In broad day, only,
The Guest may knock.

CONSOLATION.

I

Now cease thy sobbing. Life is done ;
And only Death is here. Compose
Thyself ; and strew white roses where
The grave is made.

I would not grieve
For what is past. Let bygones be ;
But never again invoke the power
Of Madness.

The o'erwrought brain and heart,
To suffocation prest, have failed beneath
The stress of Grief. How well it is
That Death is here. Better to be
With him, than suffer Life's long pain.
So bring sweet flowers to fill the place
Where fortunate Death has come,
With rich perfumes.

II

Not even a faded flower decks
 Thy Life. So let it pass ;—forgotten,
 As rainy nights upon the sea
 No longer sadden us on shore.
 The lily's fragrance, and the rose
 That dies for thee,—affection's gift—
 Are all thou hast in memory.
 Of days to Sorrow given. When they
 Are gone, forget thy tears, and Love
 Shall bring thee flowers : roses fresh,
 And lilies plucked in gardens fair ;
 Where Constancy has watered them
 With heavenly dews. Their morning blush
 And sunset gold are fadeless.

III

He who would be Lord of thy life
Must give with bounteous hand. Thou hast
A palace for thy dwelling. There
Thou shalt have many guests ; and they
Should drink red wine, feasting on fruits
Ambrosial. Through the wide doors should pass
Thy train with music ; and great lights
Burn their red torches till the morn.
Thou hast done well to come with him
Who gives thee all his treasure. Now,
Thou shalt not lack for ministers
To do thy will. And Poetry
Will bring fresh garlands to adorn
Thy crystal walls.

THRENODY.

I.

When thou hast called on Death, he was
Already with thee. All the night
He followed in thy steps, and seemed
To thee a shadow only. When
The morning came, he held the cup
For thee to drink. Looking on him,
Thou didst refuse ; for he was fair,
As the fair gods in thy old temples.
“Tempt not my Soul,” then didst thou cry.
“I must not drink the cup of Love !”
Then Death his mantle drew about
Him ; while thy Soul, unknowing, shrank
Away.—Never hast thou known Death,
Even though he followed thee.

II.

Since thou hast taken Death for Love,
And turned away thine eyes, then look
On him who takes away the cup,
And turns thy flowers to dust. He is
Thy earth-born deity ; and goes
Beside thee in the sad turmoil
That is thy world. And he is Love,
Who makes his spoil of thee. He drinks
Thy wine ; and leaves thee to kind Death
Let not bewilderment seize on
Thy soul. For many take Love's name ;
And Death is Love Divine who holds
Thee to him. Thou hast called on him,
Not knowing he was Love,

III.

If thou wouldst choose betwixt True Love
And Death, thy Soul already hath
Made choice.

Love always was with thee.
Always thy Soul went out in search
Of Death. Now she has found him, rest
Thou also with thy Soul in peace.
Let earthly True Love go. Return
To dust : and in the secret house
Where Immortality is born,
Thou shalt find Life again with Death.
Long has he followed thee. Long hast
Thou called on him. So let him lead
Thee from the world ; while thy True Love
Sleeps, drunken with the wine of Life.

RETURNED.

I.

In the wild night I come
Upon the wingéd steeds,
Who bear the ancient names
Eolus and Auster.
Open the portals wide,
Again would I enter
Into thy chamber. Once
I was visibly
Lord of all. Now am I
Only the ghost of him.
Now am I suitor, where
Then I was dominant.
Now must I ask of Life
That which I forfeited,
Leaguings myself with Death.
Let me once more draw near,
Let me rest once again
On thy kind bosom. I
Am thy risen Lord,
Not his pale image.

II.

Enter, thou mighty one !
Still art thou Lord of Life.
Eolus and Auster
Bring thee from Paradise,
Where thou hast dwelt among
Roses and lilies. Sweet
Is thy kiss as the breath
Of the Zephyr that floats
In the gardens at Dawn.
Wide open the portal ;
And fair is the chamber.
Invisible art thou
To them who would mock thee,
Conquered by Death.

Enter,

And rest thee. No image
Art thou to my fealty ;
But brighter thy Presence
Than when thou wast vested
In raiment of Flesh.

CYTHEREA.

Beyond the murk of night there shines
A star. The sea reflects her beams ;
And I, who turn my face from Heaven,
Can see her in the deep. Although
She is not Venus' self—so like
Is she, that I am lost in dreams
Of deep-sea wonders. I forget
The tales of sirens who betray,
And the wrecked treasure lying there.
But far below the coral reef,
Where rainbow-shells and flowers of the sea
Adorn her grotto—there, I think,
Sweet Cytherea sleeps among
The emerald shadows.

THE TRESPASS.

Wandering in thickest dark, I lost
My way ; so entered at a door
That opened in a garden wall.
Then in the midst of lilies fair
And roses—by their perfume sweet
I knew them in the dark—I found
My footsteps straying far
Along the winding walks of this
Strange garden. Then I thought to pluck
The fragrant flowers as I went.
So was I laden with my spoil.
But when I would return, the path
Was hid in darkness ; and the door
Lost in the shadows. So I stood
Afraid to call, lest one should come
To chide me for my theft. And now
The lilies I had gathered drooped ;
The rich, dark roses had no scent ;
And sad reflections held my Soul,

All the night long. When Dawn revealed
The narrow pathway, and the door
Where I had entered in—lo ! there
The Gardener stood. Cold words were none.
Smiling, he said, this was my own
Domain ; an old inheritance
Long time unvisited. Then shame
Assailed me, that I had been found
A robber, dumb with fear, when night
Held me enchanted in my garden dim.

THE WINDS.

I.

When down the Valley the great Winds
Come with their lordly step, the trees
Sway with the sound of rolling seas ;
But the soft notes of birds still come
From their green depths. They sing the songs
Of mating and nest-building ; though
The grand Orchestra of the sky
Drowns the small hum of insect life.
In the dark pines the Winds have found
The stateliest harps on which to play
Their diapason. But across
The stream, in the long grass above
The graves, they go in silence. There
They sweep away the dews of night.

II.

About the Church they gather—hushed
To hear the Voice of God ! They would
Be reverent. But spoken words
Are not the spirits' language. God
Speaks through the winds, and they must know.
And so when in the Church I hear
Their voices rising, as they call
Me to the hills, where God has built
His temple—I go out beyond
The drowsy portal ; far above
The sleeping Valley and the songs
Of nesting birds ; where Eagles float
On quiet wings—upborne by Winds
Where they would fly.

ECHO.

I.

The one I know lives in a Valley where
 I sometimes go when I am tired of hills.
 And there together we make merry, while
 The hushed stream listens in the rocks. He calls
 Across the fields ; and little children hear
 Him in their play ; and ask each other why
 Spirits invisible mock them always,
 When they would hear the Nightingales at noon.
 Then my dear Echo cries :

“The Nightingales

At noon !” And silvery laughter bursts from
 hedge

And tree, as if the birds mocked Echo ; when
 They really are sleeping in the wood.

So all day long we make the Valley ring
 With jest and music. Then I seek the hills.

II.

In the recesses of the hills I live
 With a sad spirit, who is grieved

When I have been with Echo in the Vale,
 She loves not idle merriment. She breathes
 The finer air above the mingled sounds
 That clash below. And when I come at night
 Back to her wise reproofs, I am ashamed
 That I have wasted all my hours with one
 Who has no Soul. For Echo has an empty mind
 Bereft of reason. He will but repeat
 Words that he cannot understand, so when
 I catch his trick of speech, and laugh with him,
 I seem a Madman and a Fool to her
 Who loves the sober and the wise.

III.

Would that I might my foolish Echo bring
 From his low-lying Valley. In the hills
 A Soul might be imparted to him. Here
 He might dwell among the crags that hang
 Above the thundering waterfall. And when
 The eagles cry he can repeat their note.
 So would he soon forget the voice of mirth.
 Great Nature's lessons in the hills are full
 Of solemn teachings. They who hear, although
 They have been crazed by folly, cannot long
 Withstand them. They are heard by night and day ;

Even in the silence. So let Echo come,
And live with mighty Spirits who abide
In the fastnesses of the ancient rocks.

IV.

The sportive Echo of the Valley came
To dwell with me upon the mountain-top,
Where I had found a cavern in the rocks
For him. "Here," said I, "shall be Echo's home.
To him the barren pines will whisper. He
Will answer back as gently. When the voice
Of the great waterfall shall reach him, he
Will give, in awful tones, the very sound
Of falling thunder. We shall hear no more
The tinkling laughter of his native brooks.
A fit companion will he be for hours
Of meditation." But when Echo heard the sweep
Of wintry storms in the ravine, he fled
Back to his Valley ; where he mocks me still.

V.

Although I am no longer playfellow
To Echo, yet I sometimes wander near
His shaded haunts beside the running brook,
And there I hear him answering the call
Of solitary birds, who seek their nests

Among the trees. His voice delusive seems
 The note of nightingale or wren ; so they
 Who hear him think the one beloved returns
 From weary wanderings in the sky ; or brings
 News from the field and groves that lie beyond.
 Then they wait happy in their nests, and give
 To Echo sounds of Joy which he repeats.
 So all the Valley rings with songs of birds
 And Echo answering, finer than them all.

VI.

When I would chide his sad deceit, he tells
 Me I have lived too long among the clouds.
 I do not know the sadness of the Vale
 When he is gone. Abandoned Nightingales
 Call vainly. Fearful, then they hide away
 And sing no more. The Brook has not the Voice
 Of the great Waterfall ; but softly sings
 Upon its way ; and Echo takes delight
 In its low syllables. So in the trees
 He whispers the Brook's song ; and lovely nymphs
 Dance to its measured rhythm.

When silent he,
 Sadly the Brook moves on. The woodland dance
 No more weaves in and out the golden mist
 Upon the flower-strewn bank,

MAY.

The changing season brings
New hopes. The robin sings
At morning ; and at eve
The cuckoo calls. I leave
My cares behind. I go
From Winter's wind and snow
With the young Spring. We find
The great world fair and kind,
With beauty everywhere.
The flower-scented air,
The tender sunlight, earth
In misty green, give birth
To joyous thoughts. We rise
With them to April skies,
And see the open gates
Where sweet Perfection waits
The lovely coming May ;
She brings the full-robed Day
Of Happiness. My Heart
Goes out to her. Apart
From Sorrow will I stray,
In myrtle groves with May.

JUNE.

The silence of the budding trees is changed
To the soft murmur of the crowding leaves ;
And from the Valley flies the Spring, o'ercome
By Summer's flaunting host.

The lilies fair
Are withered ; pink arbutus gone ; the wealth
Of bloom that clothed the orchard fallen to dust.
But the sweet honeysuckle tempts the bee,
And early roses are in bud. The world
Is still a shrine for Beauty's worshipers,
And Nature's incense rises to the skies.
A deeper joy is in the wild-bird's note,
As all day long, in sunlight or in shade,
He sings beside the noisy stream ; while soft
And tenderly his mate calls from the nest.

She thinks her song has turned the thunderbolts
 From their dark ambush in the hills, whence they
 Descended on the Valley ;—and has brought
 The sun of June to light their nest. She thinks
 His voice evokes the tender worms to come
 Above the ground after the rain, for him
 To so provide the rest with food.

Not like

A mate I know, who leaves her nest to seek
 In high-walled gardens tempting fruits that blush :
 And who has made a refuge from chance stroke
 Of lightning, in the crevice of a tomb.
 And when at morn or eve she hears the song
 Of her bright pluméd lord, she only thinks
 He calls her to the shade.

THE PROTECTING OAK.

I.

Deep in the forest grow dark ferns
 About the Oak. They hold the dews
 Of morning, though the Hours burn
 The crown of their protector. Winds
 That tear his leaves and scatter them,
 Reach not the ferns. Only the airs
 That steal through friendly boughs, can touch
 Their beauty ; so they tremble not.
 Only a gentle waving stirs
 The golden butterfly who drinks
 The nectar kept for him. So thou
 Art sheltered from the elements. Thy life
 Is passed in shadow of the Oak
 Who towers in the Sun.

II.

Who thought the Oak was dead, saw not
 The tender buds beneath the snows ;
 Nor knew the Spring would touch with wand

Enchanted the great rugged limbs
Unfolding leaves—a miracle.
Winter had taken the Old Year's robe,
And on the naked boughs had hung
His icicles. The birds had flown
To distant palms ; and silence dwelt
In the Oak-tree.

But now it stirs
With melody ; and sometimes downward
Flutter strange scarlet wings that flash
Their color in the shade.

THE OAK'S PLEA FOR VIOLETS.

I.

The scented Violets grow thick
 In the deep shadow of the Oak.
 The Sun has never blanched their hue,
 Nor stolen their perfume. The wide fields
 Are sown with daisies. Hearts of gold
 Have they ; but they are scentless.
 Transplant the Violets,—and they
 Will lose their charm, and will not be
 The rivals of the hardier flowers.
 Let them remain among the dews
 Protected by the tree. Gather
 The daisies for the children. Let
 Them weave their garlands. But leave
 The Violets for Poet's eyes.

II

Beneath the Oak, the Violets
 Bloom late. The early Spring was cold ;
 And snows have lingered in the Vale ;

So even the Oak put forth his leaves
With caution.

Now he is aglow
With Life. The tempest shakes in vain
His sturdy boughs. He will not lose
One leaf upon the wind. The Sun
Can never reach his roots. He stands
Fixed in his place, where Nature placed
The acorn—a century ago.
But yesterday the violets
Were brought by tender airs, and sown
Under the grateful tree.

III.

They who would pluck the Violets
Must come at early morn ; for then
They are new-opened ; and they tell
Sweet stories of the Dawn. Each day
New blossoms look abroad ; and each
Has its own tale.

When Evening comes
It is forgot. The flowers dream
Among the leaves. Then the great Oak
Protects them from malicious Elves,

Who haunt the wood at night ; sheltering
The hornéd Owl, whose warning voice
Bids the intruder fly. Think not
To find for Violets a bank
Where they can bloom secure, as here.

THE VOICE IN THE OAK.

The great Oak budded in deep silence. When
 The leaves unfolded, trembling in the air,
 Low whispers stole among them ; and a Voice,
 From distances unknown, spoke in the tree.
 " Who art thou ?" said the listening Forest. " We
 Would know what stranger, sheltered in the Oak,
 Tells fairy tales to wandering children." Then,
 " I am the stranger," said the Voice, " I dwelt
 Within the Oak in other days. I went
 Away in Autumn, when the red leaves fell,
 And dreamed all winter in the southern palms.
 Now I have come again to live among
 My native trees. I love this friendly Oak.
 I murmur in his boughs what I have caught
 In foreign lands."

Then said the Forest : " He
 May tell the truth. He is a Summer Wind
 That blows in every tree. But when he shakes
 The Oak, he stirs the leaves to whisper tales
 Of Fairy-land and Poetry."

SUNRISE.

The morning breaks upon the world ;
And from the Sea fair islands rise
To sight ; and the horizon burns
Behind the looming ships, that come
From distant shores.

All night, we looked
On darkness, thick with misty shapes,
Which had no form. The glimmering torch
Held by the Evening Star, sufficed
To banish fear. But now the Dawn
Has come, and we can see how safe
Our anchorage,—the haven gained ;
While far across the bar the waves
Beat vainly. We have lain secure
All night, beneath the friendly cliff.

II.

Outside, the robbers of the sea
 Have sailed into the dark. They passed
 Our bark, hid in the shadow ; so
 Were we preserved from perils unknown,

* * * * *

Yet have we kept our silent watch
 With the brave Pilot at the helm,
 Who slept not—though he never called
 The Hours of the Night, and “ All is well !”
 But had we known what Danger sailed
 The seas, while we were safe in shore,
 We had not kept aloof from him,
 Who watched the tides, and held us fast.
 But now the morn is here, we may
 With him go out upon the main.

A POET'S CHOICE.

"Once in a Century the Aloe blooms,
But every day new Roses greet the world.
So why await the lingering beauty, since
The sweetest flowers are ready to thy hand?"

"I know," the Poet said, "how beautiful
And how profuse the Roses are; but I
Would choose a flower rare and wonderful
So I will wait another hundred years."

"But can'st thou live alone while Roses smile
Around thee? Their sweet scent must touch thy
soul

With thoughts of Love. So gather them, and dream
In happiness until the Aloe blooms."

"Ah, yes," the Poet sighed." But Death shall give
The Aloe—in the hundred years!"

LOVE UNATTENDED.

In the great palace where Love dwells,
 She never is alone. With her
 A hundred handmaidens abide,
 To braid her garlands, and to crown
 With them her flowing hair. They bring
 Each day a new-made robe, that one
 Has brodered with white pearls, and one
 Has starred with golden flowers. So, Love
 Is always clad and garlanded
 With beauty.

One dark Summer morn
 Love rose from her great ivory bed,
 And saw her chamber empty. None
 Were there to greet her, or to give
 Her robe and garland. Angry, then,
 She loudly called. No answer came.
 So in her haste, unclothed, she flew
 All naked as she slept, across
 The silent court where fountains played
 In the faint sunlight. So she ran
 To find her handmaidens. But they

Had gone. Silent their chamber was,
And empty. Withered garlands lay
On the cold floor ; and jewels shone
On the unfinished robe. Then Love
Took in her royal hands the silk.
About her shoulders white she wrapped
The shining stuff. So now was she
Covered ; and her fair limbs were hid.
And even in such unshaped attire
She was a queen. And when she sat
Beside the fountain. One who came
To beg a draught of her was glad
To find great Love without the robe
And wreath prescribed by Law
Divine.

But when another day
Had come, her maidens all returned.
Affrighted by a shadow, they
Had spent the night in tears ; and morn
Had found them pale and sad. So they
Had fled from Love, who cannot look
On pallid cheeks unmoved. But Love
Forgave ; for she had entertained
The stranger without ministers.

RESIGNATION.

I cannot dwell beside the stream that flows
From Paradise. It brings upon its breast
The fallen leaves of roses, and faded stars
Of blue forget-me-nots, that grew beyond
The hills where I am banished. So I build
My bower beside the quiet pool that lies
Beneath the cypresses. There blooms a timid
Weed, that lifts its flowers to my hand. Gathered,
It is the solace of my days ; for once
In heavenly fields it grew—my Love of Learning.
Strange, that I should lament the blushing flowers
That have no healing in their leaves ; that bloom
And fade within a day. But so my Spirit
Grew, nourished by magic charm of roses' breath.

II.

When I had lost my place in Paradise,
 I missed the gardens, rather than the choirs
 Of angels. For within my bower I have
 A singing bird, whose notes, attuned to Love
 And Sorrow, suit the temper of my Soul.

* * * * *

When I am called back into Heaven, I will
 Not let the roses fall ; nor perish the sweet
 Forget-me-nots. They shall be gathered in
 Their bloom, and fill the chamber of my Soul
 With beauty. I will sit embowered among
 Them ; and I may forget the weariness
 Of Learning. While I dwell among the cypresses,
 I always dream of Paradise.

LILIES AND ROSES.

I.

I have not asked the Stars what Fate
Is mine. I would not know the hour
Of Destiny. There is a hand
That guides me ; and I cannot stray
Far from the narrow path that leads
Away from worldly snares. Sometimes
A wish to taste forbidden joys
Draws me to wander in the fields,
That border on my way. I find
Fair flowers, and gather them. They die ;
And I, repentant, turn. My guide
Awaits me, and his hands are full
Of lilies. So my Soul, ashamed,
Receives the undeserved award.

II.

Why should I sigh for roses, when
The lilies are so beautiful ?
Their gilded fairness fills my mind
With peace. But still my heart complains,
And cries for the red rose, that nods
Beyond the wall.

So to my guide
I come with prayer : “ Go, pluck for me
One rose. I will not ask the wealth
Of the rose-tree. Only a bud,
As yet unblown, shall me suffice.”
Then from my side he goes afield,
And brings what I have asked ; and more—
He comes with roses laden. So,
Content, I go upon my way.

THE WITHERED ROSE.

The Daffodils I love, for they
Come in the early Year, when Spring
Is cold. But the rich scented Rose
I worship. Her beauty has the charm
Of summer time ; even when the sun
And dew no longer can bestow
Color and freshness to her cheek ,
And though her petals fade, within
My chamber still the air is sweet
With all the old enchantment. So
I hold my Rose the Queen of Flowers ;
Unlike the faded Daffodil
Whom I would leave upon her stalk.
I press her to my lips, and swear
She is the Summer's fairest one,
Even dying.

Her delicate leaves
Have never unfolded quite ; and deep
Within her heart still burns a drop

Of dew. The Sun has never drunk
Of this deep cup ; and butterflies
Flew past, not knowing.

Now, it is night,
And Summer is asleep—while I
Have long been dreaming with my Rose
I have forgot how fair she was,
Blooming at morn ; for Beauty charms
Though Death is near ! Her magic spell
Is old as time.

LOVE AND SORROW.

I.

When Joy has fled, then Sorrow smiles ;
For she is constant ; and though Frost
Has killed my flowers, and my house
Is desolate, with me she still
Abides.—Joy is inconstant, yet
I loved her well ; though knowing all
Her fickleness and her deceit ;
For me she loved not. I was born
Predestined to be Sorrow's own.
Farewell, dear Joy ! Sorrow and I
Are one.

But when the Summer comes,
Return again !—Sorrow herself
Will welcome thee. Constant she is ;
But Love may turn her heart to thee.

II.

When Love is joined to Sorrow, who
Can dwell with them? Their house should be
Swept clear of all intruders. They
Would shut out all the world. Even Joy
Is given reluctant welcome. Death
Alone can come and go at will,
For he is loved of both. So I,
Whose name is one with Death's,
Take counsel with them. And I find
Joy has brought Jealousy ; and Love,
Looking on Sorrow, is insane !
Between them, I have hung a screen
Of climbing roses. May their scent
Bring pleasant dreams.

SILENT COMPANIONSHIP.

I.

In the fair garden where I dream, there stands
A marble figure on its pedestal,
Enwreathed with vines. I planted them, so they
Should hide the feet of the old sylvan god,
Whose head serene, with crown of sculptured
 flowers,
Rises above. This is the only friend
To whom I bring the burdens of a Soul
Freighted too heavily with grief. Silence
And Nature give the sympathy I crave ;
And when I lift my eyes I see his brow
Soft in the starlight ; while a gentle wind
Stirs the dark vine to whisper tenderly,
That in my garden I am not alone,
With my undying Sorrow.

II.

Sometimes I wish he would descend, and sit
Beside me ; and that I might feel a hand
In mine, while the dark Night is deepening
Around. But never moves he from his stone
Where the great Master Workman placed him, long
Ago. So then I lean my brow against
The friendly vines ; and almost have I prayed
To this old image. He might answer me,
Had he a language that could reach the ear,
Of mortals. But we are dull ; and so we miss
The meanings of the Gods, unless they play
On pipes, leading the dance with nymphs, far in
The shades of groves Arcadian. Often
We hear their notes at Twilight, or the Dawn.

ARACHNE'S ROBE.

On days when fair Arachne spins ; and flowers are left
To droop untended in the sun ; her lover's soul
Is wrung with sadness ; for the hours to him have all
Been wasted. Butterflies have flaunted wings of gold
And silver, shaming the dark texture lustreless
His Lady wears. Why should she spend the fleeting days
In irksome tasks, to such a thankless end ? For he
Who dwells beside the azure lakes, beneath the skies
Of gold and purple splendor, cares no more to look
On sober colors, woven in the shade, with toil
And weariness.

Far better had it been, if she
Had come into the fields, and seen the lilies grow,
She might have worn the Evening's veil ; or clothed herself
In meadow mist. Her lover would have been content.

THE LAUREL

I.

Where the rude hills have borne the Oaks,
Among their hardy trunks I saw
The Lady Laurel, peering forth
On the highway. Why she should choose
To keep her tryst with June so far
From the great cities, where her name
Would give her precedence, I know not.
Here the rustics make her room
Below the honeysuckle, when
They ask her to their feasts. Scarcely
Do they remember she is sought
By Heroes and by Poets. So
I wonder why she waits beneath
The Oak, upon the rugged hills.

II.

The winds among the Oaks have brought
Sweet incense to the Laurel. They
Have blown across far lands and seas
And heard the Lady Laurel named
Among great princes.

Who have asked
That she might crown them at the end,
Then the world's fight was won ; or hang
Her garlands on their tombs. Beauty
And strength spring from the scanty soil
Where skies are pure.

So here the Laurel
Comes ; and breathes the mountain air. She holds
Pink flowers to bribe the passer-by,
That he may spare her leaves. They are
For other hands.

WORDLY GOODS.

I have been gathering fallen leaves.
A little time they wear the tints
Lent by decay ; but soon they fall
To dust, and wither ; so the wreath
I wove of them no more delights.
Now will I go with brows uncrowned,
And empty hands, since Summer's flowers
Are gone.

And as I walk in Shade,
Hearing the voice of Doves complain,
I may the Laurel find, that late
Retains its beauty. Then will I bring
Rare garlands to the banquet, though
The fallen leaves are dead.

MY QUIET HOURS.

Under the pleasant trees that hold
The warm sunlight their prisoner,
Yielding free passage to the breeze ;
We bring our weariness, and here
It turns to Rest.

 In the cool shade
We breathe sweet woodland scents,
And essences impalpable
Steal to the blood, and add their power
To vitalize. When we have passed
An hour in this pure air, we would
Not enter again the close-shut room
Where we have lived before ; for there
Rest vanishes ; and Weariness
Seizes again the Soul.

II.

So let me raise my tent beyond
Man's habitations. I would rest

Under its airy roof, when night
 Descends from the far hills ; for then
 I should not waste the sacred flame
 Of all-consuming Darkness. Stars
 Would shine in open spaces. Fresh
 And strong the winds of Heaven blow
 About my earthly bed. I can
 No longer dwell beneath the roof
 That shelters Care, and Souls bereft
 Of joy. Only the wilderness
 Invites the blessed Spirits. There
 I will stay.

III.

Although I go
 Alone, and they who love me scorn
 My shifting roof (for I shall follow
 The changing Year), yet will I find
 The fairest company beneath
 The sun.

Innocent children play
 Among the shadows. Maidens, youths,
 And the wisest of all times, are there
 At Dawn and Twilight. They have come

From dwellings that were tombs—like mine ;
And people now this happier world.
But the irreverent Soul that hastes
To join me in the wilderness,
Shall miss the path, and vainly seek
My white tent gleaming in the trees.

AUTUMN REVERY.

The Summer's glory is gone by,
 And Autumn rains have spoiled the trees ;
 Yet the soft loveliness that rests
 In faded colors, and the mist
 O'erhanging, but not veiling all
 The beauty of the grove, makes me
 Reflect.

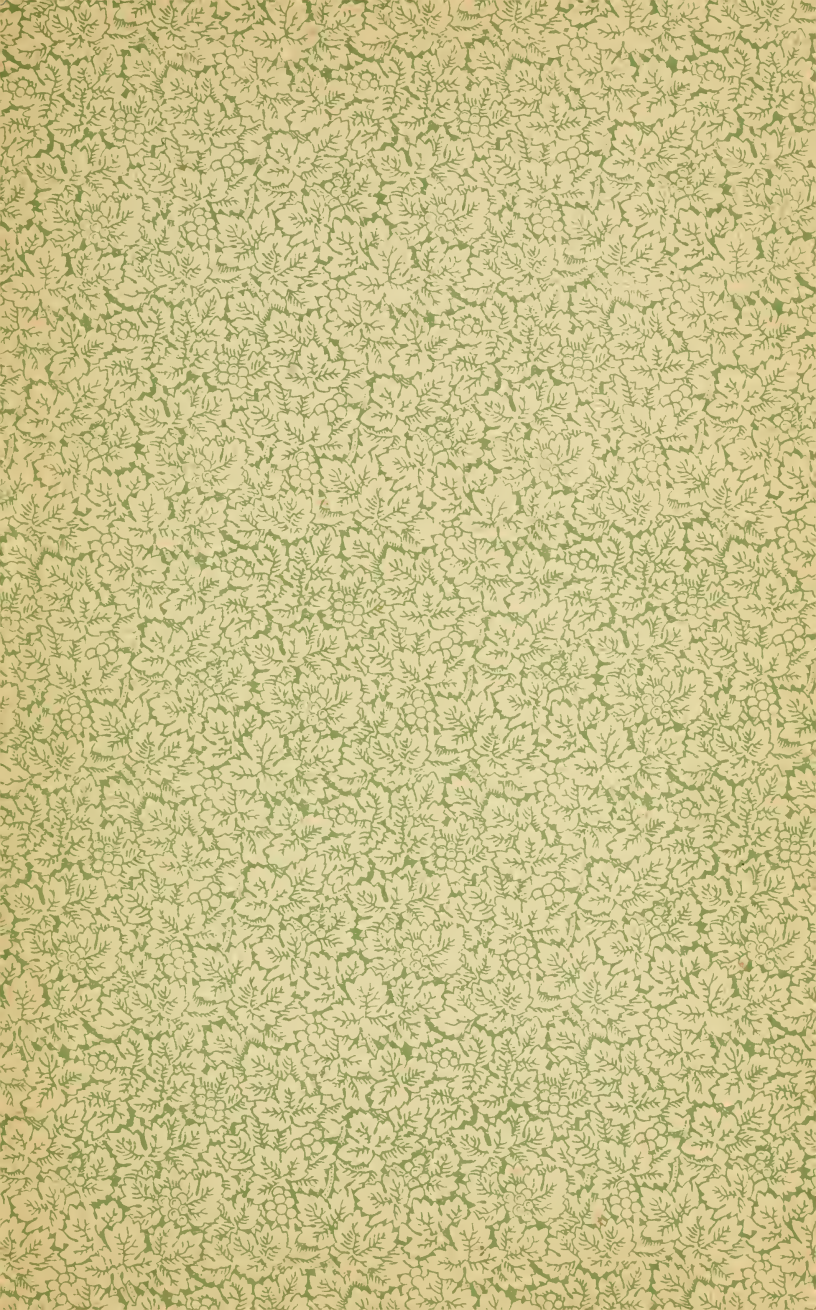
 This is the conquering grace
 That steals into man's heart—the glow
 And finer essence that remain
 When Youth is gone.

 I would not here
 Repeat the whisper of the rain ;
 Nor tell what it hath told all day,
 Falling in quiet pools wherein
 The shadows only flit. Yet while
 It trembles, chilled by haunting looks
 Of cold November, there are dreams
 Of spring among the thin, bare trees ;

And through the creeping mist I see
The floating visions dim of long
Ago. And Death—the mystery—
Forever weaves his spell about
My dreams. The rain—the sighing wind—
Can tell no more in their soft tones
Than Death has told me, in the days
When summer still was here ; when gold
And purple shot the evening sky
With splendor, caught from fading worlds
Like mine, that rolls in dusk.

THE END.







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